

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4 and 6-8 remain pending and under examination in the above-identified application. The limitations of claim 2 have been incorporated into claim 1. Claim 9 has been cancelled as redundant over the subject matter in the now amended claim 1. For similar reasons, claim 10 has been cancelled as the subject matter is now included in claim 1.

The objection to claim 9 set forth in paragraph 2 on page 2 of the outstanding Office Action has been rendered moot by the amendments offered with this response.

The rejection of claims 1, 2, 4 and 6-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are respectfully traversed. The objection set forth in paragraph 4 on page 2 of the outstanding Office Action has been addressed in the amendment to the language of claim 1. It is believed that the structure of the claimed invention has been clarified. In view of the cancellation of claim 10, the objection set forth at the top of page 3 of the Office Action is deemed to be moot.

The rejection of claims 1 and 6-8 as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Mori (JP 02088310) is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

With the amendment offered in this response, claim 1 is no longer anticipated by Mori since the subject matter of claims 2 and 9 is incorporated into and limits claim 1. All of the

remaining claims depend from claim 1 and therefore are not anticipated by the cited Mori reference.

Furthermore, Mori fails to expressly describe the claimed range of between 5 and 10 mm in defining a vent groove or protrusion between adjacent spews in the lower sidewall region of the tire as now claimed in claim 1.

As stated in the specification of the present application on page 7, the vent groove in the lower sidewall has a width in a range of from 5 to 10 mm, preferably 5 to 8 mm, when measured in the tire radial direction along the inclination of the sidewall outer face. (See specification, page 7, lines 17-19). These parameters are critical as is clear from the text in the specification on page 7 at lines 26-29. The specification discloses that if the width is more than 10 mm of the vent groove, the strength of the sidewall portion decreases and the tire looks unattractive. If the width of the vent groove is less than 3 mm, bareness of rubber is caused by unevenness or change in height of the radially outer end of the bead apex. These critical parameters are now limitations in the independent claim 1.

Other limitations in claim 1 are set forth on page 7 of the specification in lines 20-22 and the criticality of the parameters is set forth on page 7 at lines 23-26 where it is stated that if the depth of the vent groove is less than 0.15 mm, bareness of rubber is liable to occur. If the depth is more than 0.5 mm, the radially outer end of the bead apex appears on the tire outer face

as a circumferentially extending line. These limitations are also incorporated in the independent claim 1 and all other claims depend from independent claim 1.

As is stated in the specification on page 9, the present invention provides a tire sidewall portion with both the vent emboss line and vent groove which is so constructed as to prevent the occurrence of bareness of rubber without using a deep groove as is taught in the prior art. This results in a tire having improved appearance and strength. Thus, the present invention as now claimed is distinguished from Mori and neither disclosed nor anticipated by Mori nor rendered obvious by Mori alone or in combination with Endo (JP 06055915). This is so because Mori teaches a tire having protrusions of 0.3 to 2 mm in height in the shoulder and rim cushion portion and the distance between the centers of adjacent rows is more than 1 mm. The Mori reference is 15 years older than the present application and the present application describes an improvement in the strength and appearance of the tire with the limitations as now claimed.

Even when Mori is combined with Endo, the groove height or depth is not the same as now claimed in the present application.

In view of the foregoing arguments and amendments, reconsideration and favorable action are respectfully solicited. It is believed that the claims, as now limited, are patentable over the art of record and allowance of the present application is respectfully urged.

Application No.: 09/729,171

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicants hereby petition for an extension of two (2) months to May 23, 2003 in which to file a reply to the Office Action. The required fee of \$410.00 is enclosed herewith.

Should the Examiner wish to contact Applicants' representative with a view to progressing this application in an Interview, he may do so by telephoning Edward H. Valance, Reg. No. 19,896, at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington Metropolitan area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAK/EHV/bsh

Attachment: Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

VERSION WITH MARKING TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 2, 9 and 10 have been cancelled.

The claims have been amended as follows:

Claim 1. (Twice Amended) A pneumatic tire comprising

- a tread portion,
- a pair of sidewall portions,
- a pair of bead portions each with a bead core and a bead apex therein,

each said sidewall portion provided on the outer face with means of escaping air between the tire and a mold for vulcanizing the tire,

said means comprising

- a circumferentially extending, axially outwardly protruding vent emboss line disposed adjacently to a radially outer end of the bead apex and
- a circumferentially continuously extending vent groove adjoining the radially outside of the vent emboss line [and having a depth of at least 0.15],

the sidewall portions each provided with a lower sidewall region having a substantially straight profile in a tire meridian section and extending radially inwardly from a position radially inside the maximum tire section width point towards the

bead portion, and

said vent emboss line and vent groove disposed within said lower sidewall region so that a part of the lower sidewall region having a positive extent is left on the radially outside of said vent groove and the radially inside of said vent emboss line,

the vent groove having a width in a range of from 5 to 10 mm and a depth in a range of from 0.15 mm to 0.5 mm from the straight profile, and

the vent emboss line having a protruding height in a range of from 0.3 mm to 2.5 mm from the straight profile.